

Zotung language

Zotung (Zobyɑ) is a language spoken by the Zotung people, in Rezua Township, Chin State, Burma. It is a continuum of closely related dialects and accents.

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Comparison to other Kuki-Chin languages

Zotung Mizo Halkha English

Tui Tui Ti Water

Rili Tuifianriat Rili Sea

Tuivo Luii Tiva River

Ram Ram Ram Country

Laevaw Khawvel Vawlei World

Lemin/Lanoi Lei Leiphit Soil

Awsɿ Arsi Arfi Star

Sapo Thla Thlapa Moon

Maekìng Chhûm Vandawm Cloud

Khuaraw Rua Ruah Rain

Thingku Thing Thingkung Tree

Váe Kawl/Vai Kawl Burmese

Hrinnaw Hringna Hringnak Life

Kae/Ka Kei/Ka Kei/Ka Me/I

Zotung	
Zo	
Native to	Burma
Region	Rezua, Chin State Matupi, Chin State Halkha, Chin State
Ethnicity	Zotung (Zo <i>Minphu</i> in)
Native speakers	(40,000 cited 1990) ^[1]
Language family	Sino-Tibetan - Tibeto-Burman - Kuki-Chin - Zotung Zotung
Early form	Proto-Kuki-Chin
Dialects	Lungngo Calthawng
Writing system	Zocaw Roman Alphabet
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	czt
Glottolog	zotu1235 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/zotu1235) ^[2]

Ahoy Tha Ttha Good

Khua Khua Khua Village

Nopi Nula Nu Woman

Pasel Pasal Patling Man

Vapo Mipa Va Husband

Zunung Nupui Nupi Wife

Naulung Fate Fa Child

Capo Fapa Fapa Son

Canung Fanu Fanu Daughter

Imopo Mipa nau Pa hngakchia Boy

Imuanung Hmeichhenau Ngaknu Girl

Tanvae Tlangval Tlangval Male Youth

Liacca Nungak Nungak Fem. Youth

Mino Naupang Minohna Youth

Innbyn Chhungkua Chungkhar Family

Vaeccaw Laichin Rualchan Relative

Banghoi Thriankawm Hoikawm Friend

Sakheit Thlakhat Thlakhat One month

Pachia Pathian Pathian God

Awkhua Khuavar/Zîng Zing Morning

Nitchun Chhûnlai Chunlai Noon

Khuade/Nin Ni/Chhûn Chun/Ni Day/Sun

Zete Zanlam Zanlei Evening

Zinung Zan Zan Night

Zete Zanlam Zanlei Evening

Chisen Thisen Thisen Blood

Saram Ransa Saram Animal

Maren Sakawr Rang Mare/Horse

Ngasaw Sangha Nga Fish

Se Se Sia Gayal/Mithun

Vaeccua Bâwng Caw Cow

Nâw Selawi Naa Buffalo

Vok Vawk Vok Pig

Vom Vawm Vom Bear

Awte Âr Arsa Chicken

Fupo Rûl Rul Snake

Phawvoi Vaimim Fangvoi Corn/Maize

Faccan/Bu Bufang Facang/Bu Rice

Chanvuit Chhângphut Changvut Wheat

Rou Chhâm Cuar Cook

Sathum Chhuangso Uihli/Soh Boil

Sunsak Hmangai Duhdawt Love

Fuat Huat Huatnak Hate

Rah Tra Ttah Cry

Sa/Zae Zai Sah/Zai Sing

Nuin Nui Nuih Laugh

Lawm Lawm Lawm Rejoice

Lung Lung Lung Rock

Inn In Inn House

Bûk Buk Hut

Naedi Dî Ngaidih Thatch

Gnae Ngâi Ngai Miss v.

Caryn/Nul Bial/Nul Zeimanlo Zero

Kheit Khat Pakhat One

Cannin Hnih Pahnih Two

Thum Pathum Pathum Three

Pali Pali Pali Four

Pango Panga Panga Five

Truk Ruk Paruk Six

Sari Pasari Sarih Seven

Tryet Riat Pariat Eight

Takua Kua Pakua Nine

Cahaw Sawm Hra Ten

Kuil Somhni Pakul Twenty

Somthum Somthum Sawmthum Thirty

Sompali Somli Sawmli Fourty

Sompango Somnga Sawmnga Fifty

Zakkheit Za Zakhat Hundred

Thawnh Sâng Thawng Thousand

Thawnggho Sîng Sang Ten Th.

Cinkheit Nuai Ting Hundred Th.

Sample text

“A thotakkaw hmasatykyä Pachianih laevaw te vawlui a rae. Laepuiccu muinsam a hoi leipaw nih thua. A khupaw rillipikha mawhnaw nih phang a bong, te Pachia’e Muisawccu tui luikikhe a pae.”

Compared to Hakha Lai

“A hramthawkah, Pathiannah van le lei a ser hna tikah, vawlei cu mui zong a ngei lo, pungsan zong a ngei lo. Rilipi cu muihnak nih a khuh i ti cungah cun Pathian thrawnnaak cu a chawk.

In English

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Grammar

Zotung is a slightly polysyllabic language with a majority of compound words. The first syllables of compounds tend over time to be de-stressed, and may eventually be reduced to prefixed consonants. The word *hinthyano* ("survival") is composed of *hing* ("to live") and *thya* ("ability") with a nominalizing ending. Zotung has many words compound words and is an essential feature for forming new ideas and inventions. For example, the word for lipstick is *mumsessi* composed of *mung* (lip), *sen* (red), *sa* (accusative ending) and *sii* (paste).

Word order

The primary word order is SOV however, words undergo declension so the word order is very flexible. One can say “Beikinnah/Beikinnka hlaw ka sak” literally “In church song I sing”. But it can also be said as “Ka sak hlaw beikinnka” literally “I sing song in church” without losing its original meaning.

Nouns

Some nouns have gender, but there are no articles. Nouns with gender are usually animals, natural landscapes like hills, caves or specific trees, or names. Most of these nouns have endings like *-nung*, *-pi*, *-paw*, *-ly* that tell if they are feminine or masculine such as Luikunung (Name of a hill), Saepaw (Elephant), Sapi (Female offspring of an animal). Animacy and inanimacy are rarely distinguished.

Negation

Negation usually follows the verb. There are many words to denote negation. The most common being *lei*, *khy*, *nan*, and *lou*. No negation word can be replaced with another so it is difficult for learners to fully know when to use each word. *Lei* is often compounded with *-po* as in “Khuara leipo” meaning “it isn’t raining” while also indicating someone has said it is raining. *Khy* is a simple negation word used in “Khocci khy” meaning “it isn’t cold”. A negating particle “nou”, similar to the French *pas*, is also used together with *khy*. *Nan* is used as a declarative negation such as in “Innlæ pæ nan” meaning do not go out. *Lou* is used as an auxiliary as in “Khuara lou khy” meaning “It hasn’t rain”.

Noun modification

There are many endings attached to words to convey a slightly modified meaning. They may also be realized as grammatical cases. The most common are *-no*, *-zia*, *-po* and *-tu*. “-no” is used to nominalize verbs while “-zia” is for adjectives and occasionally nouns. “-po” could be a masculine ending or an infinitive ending. When *-po* is an infinitive ending, the word is stressed at the last syllable. “-tu” is used to modify verbs to an accusative form. For example,

- riapo(v. to read) – rianaw (n. reading as in scripture)
- hmuipo (v. to see) – muihnaw (n. sight, vision)
- sei (v. to sin) – seino (n. sin)
- ou (n. a non specific attitude) - ouzia (n. attitude)
- phuapo/phan (v. to compose) - phuatu/phantu (n. composer)

Noun declension

All nouns undergo declension because it is a necessary element of the language. Declension is the main reason why the word order is very flexible. Without declension, the language is not understandable. For example, the sentence *marannih lampikya a cue* “the mare runs on the road” cannot be rewritten as *maran lampi a cue* since it wouldn’t make any sense. Although declension cannot be ignored, the general word order SOV can be ignored to create “*lampikya marannih a cue.*”, “*lampikya a cue marannih.*” or even “*lampikyanyin a cue marankha.*”

Singular and Plural Distinction

Singularity and plurality are shown in words in a consistent way. A singular word may sometimes be inflected using numerical adjectives. Plural words are almost always inflected to agree with the grammatical number. The usual plural suffix is *-æ* or *-hæ*. Dialects where the *h* is not pronounced in some writings write the plural suffix with an apostrophe so that a word like *nolungæ* is written as *nolung’æ*. Other writers use

other methods to show plurality some being *nolungàe* and *nolung'e*. Plurality isn't required when numbers or numerical adjectives are being used. The phrases *lutrya nolung* and *nolungae lutrya* are both grammatically correct while the majority of speakers show plurality in both formal and informal speech.

Pronouns

In Zotung, there are pronouns for the nominative, accusative, dative and genitive cases. Some of the pronouns in different cases are the same but have a different stress or pitch.

Nominative

1 SG NOM: Ka

1 PL NOM EXC: Kae

1 PL NOM INC: A, Aemi/Aeni (dialectal)

2 SG NOM: Na

2 PL NOM: Nannin

3 SG NOM: Ah, Min (dialectal)

3 SG NEUTER NOM: Anih

3 PL NOM: An, Mimaw

Accusative

1 SG ACC: Kae, Kamaw

1 PL ACC EXC: Kaeni

1 PL ACC INC: Oun

2 SG ACC: Nang

2 PL ACC: Ae

3 SG ACC: Amaw

3 PL ACC: Hae

Dative

1 SG/PL to 2 SG: Kae

1 SG/PL to 2 PL: Kae -uh

1 SG to 3 SG: Ka

1 PL to 3 SG/PL: A

2 SG/PL to 1 SG: Nae, yn, e (dialectal)

2 SG/PL to 1 PL: Oun

2 SG/PL to 3 SG: Na

2 SG/PL to 3 PL: Na -hae

3 SG/PL to 1 SG: Yn

3 SG/PL to 1 PL: Oun

3 SG/PL to 2 SG: Ae

3 PL to 2 SG: Ae -hae

3 SG/PL to 3 SG: Pronoun is dropped

3 SG/PL to 3 PL: Pronoun is dropped, -hae is added

Genitive

1 SG GEN: Kah

1 PL GEN EXC: Kae, Kaeke (used by itself)

1 PL GEN INC: Ake, Ah kya-e, Ah

2 SG GEN: Nah

2 PL GEN: Naeke

3 SG GEN: Ah

3 PL GEN: Mih, Mih kya-e

Verb inflection

All verbs in Zotung have two or more forms. The different forms are used for different moods and the amount that is completing the action. Most verbs are only inflected in the plural. Some verbs that are inflected in the singular change stress. However, they aren't shown in the orthography. An example of a regular verb conjugation is:

Riappo, to read; cue, to run

1st Singular: ka ria, ka cue

1st Plural Inclusive: Aeni ariaho, accueo

1st Plural Exclusive: Kaeni keria, kecue

2nd Singular: Na riah, na cue

2nd Plural: Nannina riauh, nannina cueuh

3rd Singular: A ria, a cue

3rd Plural: An riahae, an cueae.

Tense

Tense in Zotung is similar to other Kuki-Chin languages. In Zotung, verbs are inflected for in the past and future tenses. The present tenses are either in the original (not infinitive) form or are used with auxiliary verbs and time descriptive words. The continuous present tense can also be shown by suffixing. Regular verbs are inflected like the following:

1st person inclusive past: *A sahveo* “we sang”

1st person inclusive perfect past: *Phea’ sahve* “we have sang”

1st person inclusive perfect past: *Phea’ lasahve* “we have (just) sang”

1st person inclusive present continuous: *A satiamango* “we are (still) singing”

1st person inclusive present: *Sahlanve* “we will be singing (right now)”

1st person inclusive simple present: *A sauh* “we sing” or *Atu a sauh* “we are singing (in the moment)”

1st person inclusive simple future: *A sacio/A sangaw’* “we will sing”

1st person inclusive near future: *Sahlan* “we are going to sing (now)”

Orthography

Zockaw or Zo alphabet

Aa AWaw Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Yy Zz

Vowels

A AW E I O U Y

-a as in the a in father

-aw roughly between o and the au in caught

-e as in the e in pet

-i roughly between ee and the i in tin

-o roughly between o and the English cot

-u as in the oo in loot

-y as in the French u

Vowel combinations used:

-ae as in the a in bat

-ai as in the i in kite

-au as in ou in cloud

-awi as in oy in boy,

- awe as in ue in quest
- ei as in ay in play
- eu as in Portuguese *eu*
- ia as in ña in piñata
- oi as in oy in boy, may also be pronounced as the French u dialectally
- ou as in the schwa in banana
- oy as in oy in boy, may also be pronounced as the French u dialectally
- ua as in ua in quality
- ue as in ue in quest
- ui as in uee in queer
- ya as in the French *u* and the vowel *a*

Very rarely: oei, oui, uai, iau, uau, io

*awe is interchangeable with ue

*in some grammatical declension, -ua is reduced to -aw or -o, -ia is reduced to -ei or -e, long -aw or -o is changed to -a

Consonants

B, C*, D, F, G, H*, J, K, L, M, N, P, R, S*, T*, V, Z*

C after *a*, *aw*, *o*, *u*, and *y* are pronounced like a dental fricative. *C* and *s* are palatalized after *e* and *i* resulting in words like *ciate* (tsiate) and *seryn* (sheruhn). *H* is not pronounced in some dialects in certain words, for example: the plural marker *-hae*. *T* is rhotacized in some dialects that results in words like *khate* (k'ate) and *tukiaccu* (tukiathu) being pronounced (k'are) and (tukeirru). *Z* has a very wide pronunciation range. It can be pronounced like the voiced fricative *zh*, *z*, or *y*.

Digraphs: *ch*, *kh*, *ph*, *hr*, *rh*, *th*

Ch- is seldom used in native words other than family or clan names. *Ch-* evolved from the palatalized soft *t* that preceded the vowels *e* and *i*. For example, *chihno* "death" was originally *thihna* or *thihnak*. *Kh-* in formal speech is a palatalized *k* sound. However, it is pronounced in the back of the throat or like a hard *h* in informal speech. *Hr-* is a rare digraph. It has evolved into an *h* or soft *r* sound in some dialects. *Rh-* is not used in the vernacular writing.

Consonant combinations other than digraphs are mostly found in fast speech, informal speech, in some dialects or loanwords. The most common are:

bl, *br*, *fr*, *fl*, *gl*, *gr*, *kh*, *kl*, *kr*, *pl*, *pr*, *sk*, *sl*, *sn*, *sp*, *sr*, *st*, *thl*, *tl*

They are found in native words such as *tynkrin*, *cintling*, *blyn*, *klan*, *sparo* as well as in loan words like *Biathlam*, *Kris(Christ)*, *naiklab(nightclub)*, *Griekram(Greece)* and *Bethlem(Bethlehem)*.

Distribution

VanBik (2009:55)^[3] lists the following Zotung villages: Aika, Lotaw, Lawvaw, Ccangho, Pangvaw, Ramcci, Sihanthung, Zawngnak, Angraw, Polei, Vuakhipaw, Lavoikung, Darcung, Khawboi, Setlai, Lungkhin, Leipi, Calthawng, Langly, Sensi, Khawtua, Tuinia, Rovaw, Rezua, Ccawtui, Ransae, Etang, Thandya, Tuibying, Hrinthang, Siangaw, Lungthlialia, Thawlang, Hunglei, Raso, Tuilaw, Tingsi, Zesaw, Thesi, Lungring, Sungpi, Votui, Kaelung, Belae, Lungngo, Sempi, Tuphae, Lungdua, Suiton, Daidin, Din, Voiru, Narbung

Villages

1. Lungngo
2. Tingsi
3. Rezua
4. Ccawtui
5. Ransae
6. Lungthlialia
7. Etang
8. Thandya
9. Tuibying
10. Hunglei
11. Raso
12. Tuilaw
13. Thawlang
14. Siangaw
15. Hrinthang
16. Rovaw
17. Calthawng
18. Langly
19. Sensi
20. Tuinia
21. Khawtua
22. Leipi
23. Lungkhin
24. Seccae
25. Aika
26. Lotaw
27. Ccangho
28. Lawvaw
29. Pangvaw
30. Lungdua
31. Narbung
32. Ramcci
33. Sihanthung
34. Zawngnak
35. Angraw
36. Polei

37. Vuakhipaw
38. Lavoikung
39. Voiru
40. Din
41. Dinpi
42. Daidin
43. Suiton
44. Darcung
45. Tuphae
46. Khawboi
47. Ccangcceh
48. Thesi
49. Zesaw
50. Lungring
51. Sungpi
52. Sempi
53. Belae
54. Kailung
55. Votui

- Rovaw - 2 locations
- Hrinthang - 4 locations
- Calthawng - 2 locations
- Tuibying - 2 locations

55 villages in 61 locations (2017):

- 4 villages in Gangaw township, Magway Region
- 3 villages in Hakha township, Chin State
- 1 village in Thantlang township, Chin State
- 1 village in Mindat township, Chin State
- 46 villages in Matupi township, Chin State

Lost Zotung villages:

- Lawngko, nearby (very close with) Kailung
- Tuitaw, between Lotaw and Lungngo
- Tongbu, moved into Mara land and became Mara.

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